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THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, AND OTHER REGIONAL BODIES IN THE FIELD OF HOUSING

ITEM 1 OF THE TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Prepared by the Housing, Building and Planning Branch
Bureau of Social Affairs

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Responsibilities of United Nations bodies in housing, building and planning	2
Committee on housing, building and planning	3
1. The responsibilities of the Committee	3
2. Composition of the Committee	4
Housing and urban development in the development decade	6
Work of the United Nations headquarters including technical assistance and special fund	10
Regional commissions	
I. Economic Commission for Europe (Prepared by ECE)	16
1. Economic aspects of housing policy	17
2. Housing and Building Statistics	17
3. Technical aspects of housing policy, with particular reference to reducing the cost of house construction	18
4. Town and country planning	19
5. Housing problems in countries in the course of industrialization	20
6. Development of contacts and technical co-operation	20
II. Housing activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and other regional organizations	21
1. Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)	21
2. Activities of the Organization of American States in the field of housing	22
3. Activities of the Inter-American Development Bank in Latin America	22
4. Co-operative activities in Central America aimed at improving housing conditions	23

/III. Economic

III. Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East 24

1. Housing and Building Materials Section 25

2. Working Party on Housing and Building Materials . . . 25

3. Regional Housing Centres 26

IV. Activities of the Economic Commission for Africa in the Field of Housing 27

Specialized Agencies 28

1. International Labour Organization 28

2. Food and Agriculture Organization 29

3. World Health Organization 29

4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 30

5. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation 31

Annex 33

/INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes of the United Nations is: "to co-operate in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; and to be a centre for harmonizing the action of nations in attaining these common ends."[1/]

The United Nations works through six main organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, Economic and Social Councils, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat.

International economic and social co-operation rests with the General Assembly and under its authority, with the Economic and Social Council which consists of sixteen members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms; six are elected each year. Members are eligible for immediate re-election. Each member of the Council has one representative.

The Economic and Social Council is responsible, i.e., for promoting: "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development; solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems; international cultural and educational co-operation. ...The Council is also empowered to perform the following more specific functions: Make or initiate studies and reports on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and to make recommendations on such matters to the General Assembly, to United Nations Members, and to the specialized agencies concerned. ... and furthermore: call international conferences on matters within its competence. ...The Council performs such functions as fully as its competence in order to carry out the recommendations of the Assembly. ...With the approval of the General Assembly, the Council may also perform services at the request of members of the United Nations. It may, in addition, obtain requests from members on steps taken to give effect for its recommendations, and those of the Assembly on matters falling within its competence."[2/]

1/ Everyman's United Nations, Sixth Edition, Published by the United Nations Office of Public Information, New York, 1959.

2/ Ibid.

/A. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNITED NATIONS BODIES IN HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING

The Economic and Social Council co-ordinates the various inter-governmental agencies ("specialized agencies") such as ILO, FAO, WHO, UNESCO, which have wide responsibilities in the economic, social, educational, health and other fields.

The Council arranges for consultation with international and national non-governmental agencies concerned with matters within its competence.

The Economic and Social Council is aided in its work by several expert bodies, called commissions, sub-commissions and committees, which keep international problems in their respective fields under continuous review.

"They maintain close contact with the work of the Secretariat in their fields, study the problems and proposals referred to them by the Council, and submit to it detailed reports and recommendations."

The ECOSOC bodies which deal directly with housing, building and planning and related problems are:

1. Social Commission 3/
2. The Committee on Housing, Building and Planning.

Besides those above mentioned, there are bodies which are indirectly interested in housing, building and planning by dealing with some aspects of this subject; e.g. Statistical Commission discuss statistics relevant

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3/ The Social Commission was established in 1946. It is composed of 21 members elected by the Council for three year terms. One third is elected each year. Retiring members are eligible for re-election. The terms of reference of the Social Commission are: (a) to advise the Council on social questions of a general character and in particular on all matters in the social field which are not covered by specialized agencies; on practical measures that may be needed in the social field, measures needed for the co-ordination of activities in the social field on such international agreements and conventions on any of these matters as may be required and on their execution; (b) to report to the Council on the extent to which the recommendations of the United Nations in the field of social policy are being carried out.

/to housing.

to housing. The Population Commission deals inter alia with demographic aspects of housing and physical planning; the Committee for Industrial Development is among other things, interested in the development of the building and building materials industries and in planning of industrial estates.

B. COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING

On the basis of the recommendation of the Social Commission, a resolution (903 C (XXXIV)) was adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 2 August 1962, establishing a Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, to provide stronger and more specialized leadership in this area.

The resolution further defined the terms of reference of the Committee and established that it should report to the Council through the Social Commission and also forward its report to the Committee for Industrial Development and to the regional economic commissions in order that the Council might consider it together with the comments of these bodies which provided a new instrument for consideration of the problems involved and appropriate integration of housing and urban development programmes with economic, social and industrial development programmes. The Council decided to review the organizational arrangements for the Committee after three years.

1. The responsibilities of the Committee

The terms of reference of the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning include responsibilities for:

(a) Examination of reports concerning technical assistance activities in the field of housing, building and related community facilities and physical planning;

(b) Recommendations for the Economic and Social Council for appropriate co-ordination of these programmes among the various United Nations bodies, including the regional economic commissions, and with other international agencies;

/(c) Recommendations

(c) Recommendations to Governments, through the Council, on appropriate priorities and programme emphasis in the field of housing and related community facilities and physical planning;

(d) Promotion of research and of the exchange and dissemination of experience and information in these fields, with special reference to the needs of under-developed countries;

(e) Development of proposals for consideration by appropriate United Nations bodies and others, on such matters as financing of home construction and ownership, provision of land for homes and community facilities at reasonable cost, designs suitable for low-cost housing in different climates and cultures, improved building materials and their better use, and ways of promoting acceptance and adoption of efficient organizational and building techniques;

(f) Development of means and methods for the increased utilization of regional economic commissions in this field.

2. Composition of the Committee

The Committee is composed of twenty-one member Governments of the United Nations who (in accordance with operative paragraph 1 of the Council's resolution) are "elected by the Council on a basis of equitable geographical distribution and a balance between developing and industrialized countries." It is further stipulated that Governments designate their representatives "in agreement with the Secretary-General, with a view to achieving, as far as possible, a balanced coverage of required expertise in housing, building and urban development. There are, thus, no non-governmental organizations represented on the Committee. Those who did send observers to the first and second sessions have done so on their own initiative and by virtue of their consultative status. They were not specifically informed or invited by the United Nations. The twenty-one elected members of the Committee are

/as follows:

as follows: Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Peru, Roumania, Tanganyika, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

At its first session, the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning focussed attention on stimulating national, regional and international activities in housing, building and environmental planning with special reference to:

(a) the role of housing and urban development within the United Nations Development Decade;
(b) the promotion of research and exchange and dissemination of experience and information on housing, building and planning;
(c) the planning and implementation of pilot projects in housing, building and planning;
(d) material and financial assistance towards house construction and community improvement within overall development planning; and
(e) training and educational facilities in housing, building and planning.

The Committee also revised the international programme in housing, building and planning, which is carried out at the present time by the United Nations in collaboration with the interested Specialized Agencies and other competent international bodies, and adopted eight resolutions pertaining to the area of substance noted above as well as to co-ordination and organization of existing and increased international assistance in this field.[4/]

4/ Committee on Housing, Building and Planning report of the First session. United Nations publication E/3719/Rev.1.

/At its

At its second session which started on 22 January and ended on 4 February 1964, the Committee in conclusion of its discussions adopted six resolutions. These recommended, among other things, the establishment within the United Nations Secretariat, of a centre for housing, building and planning. The allocation to housing of an "appropriate share" of resources released by disarmament the rapid development of national industries in housing and in building in the developing countries and the direction of international assistance in housing toward the financing of housing and the establishment of state building and components industries.[5/]

C. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT DECADE[6/]

On 19 December 1961, by its resolution 1710 (XVI) the General Assembly of the United Nations designated the current decade as "the United Nations Development Decade in which Member States and their people will intensify their efforts to mobilize and to maintain support for the measures required on the part of both developed and developing countries to accelerate progress towards self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations and their normal advancement." The aim would be "to attain in each under-developed country, a substantial increase in the roll of growth, with each country setting its own target, taking as the objective a minimum annual rate of growth of aggregate national income of 5 per cent at the end of the Decade."

Within the broad scope of the proposals for activity, the Development Decade housing and urban development emerges clearly and convincingly as one of the most important goals in it.

5/ Committee on housing, building and planning report of the second session United Nations publication E/3858.

6/ This part has been composed of excerpts from document E/C.6/2, Housing, Building and Planning in the Development Decade. Report by the Secretary-General.

/Housing, building

Housing, building and physical planning programmes are the main practical means for developing the "balanced physical environment." This is only possible if housing, building and physical planning programmes and policies are given due priority in national development planning in relation to other essential activities.

International activity can help to reinforce and support national activity in all strategic aspects to speeding the development. It is expected that the decade will bring very important economic and social changes. They may be summarized as follows:

(a) There is expected to be large increase in total population during the Decade, amounting to 30 per cent increase in Asia and Africa and over 30 per cent in Latin America.

(b) Urban population is growing much faster than total population and this rapid rate of urbanization causes a growing concentration of people in large urban areas. Urban population in the developing continents may be expected to double between 1960 and 1975, adding nearly 200 million persons to the urban population of these continents. This would, in effect, require a doubling of the residential capacity of urban areas together with the provision of attendant social and communal services, utilities and amenities. Policies in regard to the provision and location of these services, utilities and amenities will play a strategic role in diverting, controlling or alternatively exaggerating the tide of urbanization.

(c) Manufacturing in the developing countries accounts for only one fifth of current output.[7] It is estimated that to achieve the income goals of the Development Decade, manufacturing output will have to rise by at least 130 per cent. This will require physical manufacturing capacity to rise by at least one and one half times and perhaps even more,

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7/ Per capita output of manufacturing goods is at present only about 25 dollars in the under-developed countries as compared with 420 dollars in the economically advanced countries. Report of the Committee for Industrial Development on its second session, E/3600, Annex V - page 31.

/in view

in view of the emphasis to be given to small-scale industry. The location of new manufacturing capacity will require careful correlation with existing and new housing and attendant services and facilities. A policy of industrialization which is not integrated with housing and physical planning policy will rapidly result in maldistribution of population, waste of existing physical capital in housing and other services, and excessively high expenditure on new physical capital and services.

(d) It is estimated that in the under-developed regions of the world, agricultural output must increase during the decade by 45 to 52 per cent if the income goals of the Development Decade are to be attained. Rural life must be improved together with the improvement of skills. The improvement of housing and community facilities must be an essential part of this process. In many of the under-developed countries, land reform and land resettlement are being carried on; this will demand new housing and services. The change to market economies from subsistence farming areas will require increased physical capital formation, in structures and services for the storage, processing and transport of goods.

(e) Expansion of extractive and service capacity sufficient to support and facilitate the achievement of the economic and social goals of the Decade include the development of mineral and water resources, and international river basins; energy production and distribution including rural electrification; transport and communications; port installations, public utilities and, on another level, public buildings and commercial centres and offices. These changes will also cause additional physical capital formation on large scale.

(f) Planning in the Development Decade must allow for some reduction in deficiencies of existing housing and related amenities. It has been estimated that over 1,000 million persons in Africa, Asia and Latin America require to be rehoused,[8/] urban residential capacity needs to be doubled to remedy existing deficiencies, and then doubled again by 1975, if the expected increase in urban population occurs. Lack of potable water and of sewerage

8/ United Nations document E/3613, page 59.

/systems threaten

systems threaten health and well-being in major cities. Rural areas are even more deficient in basic amenities and services. Physical capital formation in this connexion will also be considerable. One of the primary functions of development planning in the Decade will be to establish appropriate priorities among the various sectors competing for a share of the limited investment resources. An important phase of investment resources will also be required for the development of human resources. Nevertheless, it is evident that an adequate physical environment design to facilitate economic and social progress must be built during the decade and that in its development, housing, building and physical planning will have a major contribution made.

Targets for Housing and Urban Development in the Decade of Development 9/

"In Africa, Asia and Latin American, from 19 - 24 million dwellings should be constructed annually throughout the decade 1960 - 1970, to eliminate existing shortages in 30 years, to house the increase in population and to meet current obsolescence."

Construction on the foregoing scale at conventional levels would consume investment resources equivalent to 10 per cent of gross national product or in many cases the entire investment resources available in less developed countries. A more tolerable cost level must therefore be found.

It is estimated on the basis of actual experience in all the three large under-developed regions that with intensified research with low-cost solutions, with mass projects and maximum utilization of non-monetized resources in labour and materials, the monetary outlays would be brought down to about 500 dollars for each urban dwelling unit and another 500 dollars per dwelling unit for the ancillary urban services and facilities. The monetary outlay on dwellings and ancillary urban services and facilities in rural areas should not exceed 200 dollars per dwelling unit because of the large possibilities in rural areas for self-help and mutual aid building,

9/ From the United Nations Development Decade - Proposals for Action, Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations, New York, 1962.

/using non-monetized

using non-monetized labour and materials. The cost of providing the required housing and ancillary services and facilities at acceptable standards in the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America would be much above what these countries can now make available or what is likely to be available under present conditions for this purpose from external assistance. For this reason it seems certain that the present situation will deteriorate rather than improve in the years immmediately ahead if no new action is taken.

In January 1963 the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning in its first session, submitted to the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution in which, i.e. it recommends to the Governments of Member States, of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies, regional economic commissions and other United Nations bodies, a broad scope of action in the field of housing, building and planning during the Decade Development in order to facilitate the best fulfilment of set-up goals.[10/]

D. WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS INCLUDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL FUND

Problems of housing, building, and physical planning are an important concern of the United Nations. At its first session in 1946, the General Assembly stressed the magnitude and gravity of housing problemas in various parts of the world.[11/]

10/ For details see Committee on Housing, Building and Planning - Report of the First Session 21 January - 1 February 1963, E/3719/Rev.1 and E/C.6/Rev.1 - pages 20 and 21.

11/ Everyman's United Nations, United Nations, New York page 309.

/The activity

The activity of the United Nations has been mostly concentrated on a programme whose aims may be briefly outlined as follows:

(a) Study of living conditions and promotion of national programmes and policies of living and community improvement;

(b) Study of methods of financing housing and community improvement programmes and assistance for governments in solving their problems in this area;

(c) Extension of housing for low-income groups through the promotion of research in low-cost housing techniques and its practical application to decreasing the building costs;

(d) Study of trends in urban and regional physical planning as an integral part of over-all development plans and direct assistance to governments in the establishment of planning programmes and policies, including the training of personnel and in establishment of national centres to deal with urbanization problems.

Technical assistance for developing countries in housing, building and building materials production has reached the point where pilot projects, testing and demonstrating practical methods and techniques, provide a means for the effective use of external aid in organizing and developing domestic resources.

The following table summarizes the approximate amount and coverage of technical assistance by the United Nations Organization in recent years in housing, building and planning:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXPERTS AND FELLOWSHIPS
IN HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING a/

Year	Experts	Fellowships	Number of countries served	Cost in thousand dollars
1955	24	33	23	260
1956	29	16	25	310
1957	36	19	33	340
1958	29	47	34	420
1959	38	40	31	500
1960	42	21	28	520
1961	46	56	48	880 b/
1962	64	72	25	950 c/
1963	91	46	25	-

a/ Relates only to projects financed by the United Nations and does not include projects of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations.

b/ These cost figures relate to funds committed.

c/ These cost figures relate to funds provisionally allocated.

The trend in technical assistance activities has been to consider individual projects based on government requests as part of a long-range plan of assistance to an entire region. Thus, experience gained in a particular country may be extended to neighbouring countries facing similar problems.

Besides awarding fellowships and scholarships and assigning individual experts, assistance was being given to three regional housing research and training centres.

Seminars held included one at New Delhi in 1954 on housing and community improvement in Asia and the Far East; one later in the year at Copenhagen for Latin American participants, on financing of housing through non-profit organizations; one early in 1954 held in Puerto Rico on training for town and country planning; and one on regional planning held in Tokyo in the summer of 1958. Inter-Regional Seminar on the contribution of building research for housing programmes in developing countries was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1961.

/The problem

The problem of financing housing and community improvement programmes was discussed at several regional meetings held in 1956/57 for participants from Latin America and for participants from Asia and the Far East. A meeting on financing of housing and the integration of the building and building materials industries in Central America and Panama was held in Costa Rica in November 1957.

A meeting of experts was convened by the United Nations on Metropolitan Planning and Development in Stockholm in 1961 with the purpose of recommending suitable approaches to planning and development problems of metropolitan areas, with special reference to the less developed countries of the world which might help governments of both the industrialized countries and less developed countries in formulating appropriate policies and organizing programmes designed to deal with these problems. As a result of this meeting, a Seminar on Urbanization in Metropolitan Regions will be held in Canada in 1964.

A workshop on urbanization in Africa was held in Addis Ababa from 26 April to 5 May 1962 under the auspices of the United Nations. Participants included national and municipal officials concerned with urbanization from 23 countries. Fourteen experts from different African countries designated by the Economic Commission for Africa (one by the International Labour Organization (ILO), seven social scientists appointed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and one expert designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) also participated in the Workshop).

The Workshop identified fundamental problems arising from rapid growth of cities in Africa and the massive migration from the countryside to urban areas and made recommendations with a view to assisting governments in the formulation and execution of policies to deal with the most urgent of these problems.

A Seminar on Urban Development Policy and Planning was convened in Warsaw, Poland, from 2 - 9 September 1962 by the United Nations and was attended by representatives from 23 countries. The Seminar considered urban development policies at the national, regional and local levels with particular reference to measures for promoting a balanced economic and social development of urban areas and for avoiding the uncontrolled growth of large urban agglomerations.

/A Seminar

A Seminar on Essential Services in relation to urban and rural development was held in New Delhi, India, from 25 - 29 September 1962 under United Nations auspices and was attended by participants from 10 countries. The Seminar discussed problems relating to the provision of essential services such as water supply, sewage disposal, roads and electricity for urban and rural housing projects and made recommendations for dealing with the administrative, organizational and technical aspects of these problems.

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Housing and Urban Development was held in New York in February 1962. A meeting of the group of Experts on Housing Management and Tenant Education was held in Wellington, New Zealand in March 1963.

A seminar on Housing Statistics as an aid to programming of housing, building and planning services for Latin American countries was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 2 -25 September 1962, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Participants from 16 countries attended this seminar. The seminar's main conclusions were that housing should be programmed through general development plans, using basic national statistics and sample surveys. A similar seminar for the countries of Asia and the Far East was held in Copenhagen in August and September 1963. It was attended by 27 participants from 18 countries.

A study tour for housing and building experts from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America was organized in the USSR from 3 - 31 July 1963. The purpose of the tour was to enable the participants to gain a first hand knowledge and technical information on recent developments in housing and building technology in the USSR, where there is heavy reliance on the use of new and local building materials and prefabricated components for construction in the urban as well as in the rural areas. More than 40 participants from the four regions took part in the tour.

A seminar on Modular Co-ordination for the Central American countries was held in San Salvador from 14 - 23 August 1962 under the auspices of the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The purpose of the seminar was to establish the technical basis for the adoption throughout the isthmus

/on an

on an agreed system of modular co-ordination in building materials and components in order to permit a wider market for building materials and thus providing the basis for increased production of materials at lower cost. This project was part of the general programme of the Central American Committee for Economic Integration.

A seminar on the Financing of Housing and Related Community Facilities was organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Government of the United Arab Republic and was held in Cairo from 14 to 23 December 1963. The seminar was attended by 57 participants from 12 Arab States.

Five experts, provided by the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies completed two missions to survey and evaluate self-help housing in South-East Asia and in Africa. As a result, six pilot projects were proposed for Africa and the Government of Tanganyika requested an expert in self-help housing; also steps were taken to establish a housing and building centre in Ethiopia.

The Special Fund has advised Governments that projects such as building research and housing institutes would be considered favourably because they can help to reduce the cost of house construction which represents a large demand on a country's resources. In pursuance of this policy, the Special Fund has allocated 550 000 dollars for a building materials research laboratory at the Regional Housing Centre in Bandung.

The work in the housing, building and planning, urban development and regional planning at the United Nations Secretariat is carried out by the Bureau of Social Affairs through the Housing, Building and Regional Planning Branch. The Housing, Building and Planning Branch is composed of two sections, the Housing and Building Section and the Planning Section.

The Housing, Building and Planning Branch is mostly concerned with technical assistance for under-developed countries providing experts, organizing seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. The world housing, building and urban situation is examined and regularly reviewed by the Social Commission and Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

/Surveys on

Surveys on the world housing situation are being prepared by the Branch as well as the necessary documents for the Social Commission and for the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning.

The Housing, Building and Planning Branch co-operates in the field of housing, building and regional planning with the United Nations Statistical Office, Research and Evaluation Division, Regional Commissions and housing agencies all over the world.

E. REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

I. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (Prepared by ECE)

The European housing situation and policies are regularly reviewed and discussed by the Housing Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Housing Committee, like other committees of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, is an All-European inter-governmental organ in which the United States of America also is represented and in which take part the representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies and the international professional and technical non-governmental organizations concerned with various aspects of housing, building and planning. There are generally at least two series of housing meetings a year, consisting of at least one annual plenary session of the Committee and of subsidiary Committee meetings. The programme of work is formulated and adopted by the Committee . The work is carried out partly by the Secretariat and partly by or with the help of expert rapporteurs, provided freely for this purpose by the participating governments. The work is guided and co-ordinated and the Committee serviced by the Housing, Building and Town Planning Section of the ECE Secretariat.

/1. Economic

1. Economic aspects of housing policy

Once a year the Committee holds a full debate on European housing progress and policies. Every other year the Secretariat prepares and publishes a report describing and analyzing major changes in housing policy.[12/]

Problems of housing finance have continued to occupy the Committee's attention. A comprehensive study on the subject, with special reference to public financial aid, was published in 1958.[13/] A pilot enquiry on the private financing of housing was completed in 1961.

A new enquiry into the housing situation of European countries has been undertaken. The study will examine housing requirements (taking into account the extent of the housing shortage in different countries, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the existing housing stock and the normal additional requirements) and assess future effective demand for housing. This report will draw, extensively, on data made available by the housing and population censuses undertaken in 1960/61 in practically all European countries.

A study on major problems of government housing policies was started in 1962. There will be an analysis of the changing aims of housing policy and the instruments of housing policy, with an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches in the light of actual experience in different countries.

2. Housing and Building Statistics

The Committee, through its Working Party of statistical experts (a) advises the Secretariat on the preparation and issue of an Annual Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and a quarterly summary table of current house-building activities; (b) examines statistical

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12/ The latest such report was "European Housing Trends and Policies in 1960", ECE, Geneva (ST/ECE/HOU/2).

13/ Financing of Housing in Europe, ECE, Geneva, 1958 (E/ECE/328).

/aspects of

aspects of calculating housing needs and shortages and the need for other statistics relating to housing and building; and (c) exchanges information on problems of collecting current housing and building statistics. Work in this field takes into account that of both the ECE Conference of European Statisticians and the United Nations Statistical Commission.

3. Technical aspects of housing policy, with particular reference to reducing the cost of house construction

A comprehensive report on the effect of government measures designed to promote the technological development of the building industry, to reduce housing costs and to improve or increase productivity was published in 1959.[14/] Arising largely out of recommendations from this report, the following specific projects have been undertaken.

(a) an ad hoc meeting on standardization and modular co-ordination was held in the summer of 1959 to consider the practical application of standardization from the point of view both of reducing building costs and of developing trade in building materials and components.[15/] This was followed by another ad hoc meeting on preferred dimensions of large building components. Developments in this field are kept under regular review by the Committee;

(b) a comprehensive report, together with illustrations, on the utilization of space in current types of dwellings was published in 1959;[16/]

14/ Government Policies and the Cost of Building, ECE, Geneva 1959 (E/ECE/364).

15/ Proceedings of the Ad Hoc Meeting on Standardization and Modular Co-ordination in Building, ECE, Geneva 1959 (E/ECE/361).

16/ Utilization of Space in Dwellings, ECE, Geneva 1959 (E/ECE/350).

/(c) an

(c) an enquiry into trends in house-building costs and the elements thereof is being pursued. The purpose of this enquiry is also to throw light on the reasons accounting for different levels of cost and the specific factors affecting them;

(d) an enquiry is under way on the effect of repetition on the cost of production of selected building materials and components.

(e) an enquiry is in progress on the economical and technical aspects of the lifetime of a house with particular reference to the analysis of factors affecting maintenance costs and to the relationship between initial and ultimate costs of building materials, components and completed dwellings.

4. Town and country planning

A first inter-governmental symposium on urban renewal policies and programmes with special reference to problems of conservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment was held in 1961. The report on the proceedings was published.[17] Follow-up work is in the hands of a standing Working Party.

A study on problems of rural housing was published in 1962.[18] The report analysed the administrative, financial and technical measures required in various countries to improve the rural housing situation.

17/ Report of the Urban Renewal Symposium, ECE, Geneva 1962 (ST/ECE/HOU/4).

18/ The Rural Housing Situation, ECE, Geneva 1962 (ST/ECE/HOU/3).

/The Committee

The Committee made a contribution to a United Nations European Seminar on problems of urbanization which was held in the autumn of 1962 in Poland.

5. Housing problems in countries in the course of industrialization

Seminars are organized from time to time on specific subjects of interest to the developing countries in Europe, with the participation of experts freely provided from the more industrialized countries. The first of such seminars was held in 1961 in Yugoslavia and dealt with the problems that arise in the preparation of housing surveys and housing programmes. A report on the seminar was published.[19/]

6. Development of contacts and technical co-operation

There has been a growing collaboration between the ECE Housing Committee and the more important international professional and technical organizations, many of which take an active part in carrying out the Committee's work.

The Committee shares experience also through comprehensive study tours which are organized for this purpose once a year. A long-term programme of group visits to different countries has been established. Such visits have taken place in the past to Switzerland, France, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, the USSR, the four Northern countries, the Federal Republic of Germany and to Ireland and the United Kingdom.

19/ Report on Seminar on Housing Surveys and Programmes, with Particular Reference to Problems in the Developing Countries, ECE, Geneva (ST/ECE/HOU/5).

II. HOUSING ACTIVITIES OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)

The work of the Economic Commission for Latin America related to the improvement of housing conditions in the region is concentrated in four main fields: (a) in the past the Economic Commission for Latin America contributed to a better understanding of the problem through its economic studies of countries, subsequently providing assistance in the preparation of economic development plans to countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela. Work of this sort was carried out more recently in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and Organization of American States in Haiti, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Moreover, a team of experts has been organized by the same agencies to work in the Central American countries, and here special attention is being paid to planning for housing within the economic integration programme for Central America; (b) intensive courses in economic programming have in the past been offered by the Economic Commission for Latin America; such courses have been expanded and systematized with the establishment of the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Development. A special course on housing programming methods will be offered in 1965; (c) research on methods of social programming and in this connexion research on the methods of formulating housing programmes has constituted a special feature of ECLA's work; (d) ECLA is offering the services of regional advisers in the fields of housing programming and housing finance to the Governments in the region. The tentative United Nations work programme for Latin America in the field of housing during 1964-65 has been set forth in the Annex.

/2. Activities

2. Activities of the Organization of American States in the field of housing 20/

In the field of housing, perhaps the most important contribution of the Organization of American States has been the establishment of the Inter-American Housing and Planning Centre (CINVA) at Bogota, Colombia, which is a centre for education, training and research. In recent years it has been slightly reorganized and now offers a nine-month, twenty-five hour credit course of graduate curriculum in all aspects of housing. Students are accepted from all over the hemisphere and in its regular programme seventeen to eighteen countries are represented. In addition to this major course, two or three rural extension courses are given annually. These courses are organized in various countries of Latin America and Central America at the request of member governments. Recently a four-month training course in self-help and mutual aid housing techniques was begun. Seven countries have sent teams of five members each to work at the Inter-American Housing and Planning Centre (CINVA) and also to co-operate with the Government of Colombia's housing programme, especially its aided self-help programme which is becoming internationally well known. In addition to the training course research of various forms has been undertaken over the years. In addition to the training programme, the OAS is concerned with increasing knowledge and being able to offer a greater service to member countries in the field of general housing activities. Thus, in 1961 a meeting was held in Bogota to explore what might be done to develop survey techniques so as to obtain a better knowledge of the housing situation in Latin America. 21/

3. Activities of the Inter-American Development Bank in Latin America

Another international organization whose operation in Latin America in relation to housing is most important is the Inter-American Development Bank. After the Bank commenced its operations, it was made the trustee of a special fund known as the "Social Progress Trust Fund" which was

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20/ This is an excerpt from the Provisional Report of the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes (E/CN.12/647).

21/ OAS, Advisory Committee on Housing Proceedings. Pan-American Union, Washington D.C., U.S.A., 1962.

/contributed by

contributed by the United States Government.[22] This special fund amounted to 394 million dollars and was to be administered by the Bank "to support the efforts of the Latin American countries to initiate or expand effective institutional improvements and to adopt measures to employ efficiently their own resources with a view to achieving greater social progress and more balanced economic growth". This is the basic promise of the "Alliance for Progress" namely that there is a recognition that social problems must be attacked while economic growth is being fostered. The Bank has adopted five general criteria in the provision of loans from the Social Progress Trust Fund. They are: (a) contribution of local resources to projects and programmes; (b) long-range development plans; (c) improvement of government fiscal systems and practices; (d) improvement of rural living and land use; and (e) mobilization of domestic resources. Within these general criteria the Social Progress Trust Fund provides loans in four general fields: (a) land resettlement and improved land use; (b) housing for low-income families; (c) community water supply and sanitation facilities; and (d) advanced education and training.

4. Co-operative activities in Central America aimed at improving housing conditions

In Central America activities related to the promotion of housing conditions by the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Labour Organization have been closely co-ordinated. Work on housing has been to a large extent part of the broader Central American programme of economic integration in which the ECLA secretariat is participating in an advisory capacity. The work has been conducted through a sub-committee on housing formed by the heads of the housing institutes existing in the Central American countries. A study has been initiated in each country of the region concerning the construction industry, the production of building materials, the natural resources available for building and the

22/ Inter-American Development Bank, Social Progress Trust Fund. First Annual Report 1961, Second Annual Report 1962, and Third Annual Report 1963. Washington D.C. U.S.A.

/number of

number of training and vocational schools in the area. The purpose of this study is to determine the resources available in each country with a view to stimulating the exchange of resources taking into account the advantages and possibilities of each country and the need to avoid duplication of effort as well as to foster economic complementation.

A preliminary inventory of the industries related to dwelling construction has been made including their production and assessment of the possibility of immediate expansion of their output. A meeting of experts on modular co-ordination was held from 14 to 22 August 1962 at San Salvador, El Salvador.[23/] The experts made recommendations concerning standardization of materials and the adoption of a uniform modulus. A system of modular co-ordination is being introduced in the region with the purpose of saving materials and cutting labour costs, thus obtaining a reduction in construction costs. Based on the study of dimensions of basic materials used in construction in Central America it has been possible to make recommendations regarding standardization of materials for walls, floors, windows, doors, as well as for household equipment. Efforts have also been made to standardize the terms used in architecture and construction in the Central American countries. To effect this a vocabulary of conventional terms has been prepared which will be widely distributed among architects, engineers, building firms, departments of public works, institutes, universities and so forth.

III. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST [24/]

From the early beginning ECAFE's interest in housing for the low-income families, which constitute the major portion of the population, and in the production and utilization of indigenous building materials abundant in the region, has grown steadily from year to year. An increasing regional awareness of the need for a more co-ordinated approach to Asia's enormous and complex housing problem led to certain major developments

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23/ United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America, Sub-Committee of Housing, Building and Planning, Informe de grupo de trabajo sobre coordinación modular en la vivienda (E/CN.12/CCE/SC.4/10 1962 (Spanish only)).

24/ Excerpts from a draft prepared by ECAFE.

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within the framework of ECAFE's activities in the field of housing. They include: (a) the establishment of a Housing and Building Materials Section in the Secretariat and the compilation of studies as a means of exchanging and disseminating information; (b) the establishment of a Working Party on Housing and Building Materials; and (c) the creation of two Regional Housing Centres, one for the arid tropical zone and the other for the humid tropical zone of the region.

1. Housing and Building Materials Section

At its ninth session, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East recognized that the ECAFE Secretariat constituted a suitable agency for the regional co-ordination of the work of the various international organizations interested in the field of housing and building materials. Consequently, a Housing and Building Materials Section was set up as a unit in the Industry and Trade Division of the Secretariat.

2. Working Party on Housing and Building Materials

At its fourth session held in Rangoon, Burma, from 18 - 26 January 1952, the Committee on Industry and Trade, recognizing the importance of housing and building materials, endorsed the proposal of the Executive Secretary of ECAFE[25] for the establishment of an Inter-secretariat Working Party consisting of representatives of ECAFE, FAO, WHO, UNESCO and ILO, the Division of Social Affairs of the United Nations and others, and welcomed an offer of co-operation in research by the ECAFE Secretariat.

The Commission at its eighth session gave approval to increased attention to housing and building materials, as well as the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Working Party composed of representatives from ECAFE, FAO, ILO, UNESCO and WHO and the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs. At its third session in June 1955, the scope of the Working Party was widened to a full-pledged Working Party of experts from countries in the ECAFE region with a well-defined term of reference, including such functions as (1) guiding the work of the ECAFE Secretariat in the field

25/ Housing and Building Materials (E/CN.11/I&T/65; 26 December 1961).

/of housing

of housing and building materials; (2) reviewing the progress made by the countries of the region in tackling their housing problems, and (3) recommending further action.

To provide technical information to housing authorities and agencies in the countries of the region, the ECAFE Secretariat has undertaken technical studies and surveys, the more important among which were (1) "Survey of Housing and Building Materials in Asia and the Far East";[26] (2) "Study on Building Costs in the ECAFE Region";[27] and (3) "Guiding Principles for Housing Standards and Building Codes."[28]

3. Regional Housing Centres

Building research is extremely important in view of the tremendous housing needs and the necessity to produce the maximum amount of housing with the limited resources available. A substantial increase in the output of the building materials industries could be achieved merely by a general application of the knowledge and methods that are at present known. Still greater advances are to be achieved by further research and experimentation on new materials and methods of construction. To meet the need for organized research on new building materials, two Regional Housing Centres were established in the region. One at Bandung, Indonesia, dealing with housing and building materials in humid tropical climates, and the other at New Delhi, dealing with housing and building materials in the arid tropical climates.

To co-ordinate the work of the two Centres and to avoid over-lapping, duplication, or gaps in different areas of their activities, an ECAFE Advisory Committee of the Regional Housing Centres, a subordinate body of the Working Party, was created that meets once every two years.

Liaison Officers have been appointed by the countries, to maintain a two-way flow of technical information between the countries in the region on the one hand, and the Regional Housing Centres on the other. Both the

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26/ E/CN.11/432; November 1956.

27/ E/CN.11/568; Bangkok 1961.

28/ ECAFE/I&T/HBWP.3/1; 10 May 1955.

/Centres are

Centres are doing useful work at the national level on a continuing basis. The work programmes of the two Centres include training, development of low-cost housing designs, construction techniques and investigations on the utilization of local organic and inorganic building materials.

A Building Materials Development Laboratory has been established at the Bandung Centre with assistance from the Special Fund. The purpose of the laboratory is to promote the development of the building materials industry in Indonesia through improving and expanding production at the village and factory levels.

A Training Institute in Housing will be established at the Regional Housing Centre in India. The Institute will plan and organize international training courses dealing with planning and design, building production and building administration for technical officials at all levels. The establishment of the Institute is an important step towards enhancing the international character of the Centre.

The results of research, experimentation, and studies made at the two Centres are disseminated by the publication of building abstracts, journals digests, etc. through the Liaison Officers designated by the countries, as well as through seminars, symposia and short-term courses.

In a number of countries in the region, Forest Products Research Institutes have been established to undertake organized research on forest products such as timber, resin, bamboo, wax, etc., for building materials and other uses.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IN THE FIELD OF HOUSING 29/

A Section on Housing, Building and Town Planning has been set up within the Industry, Transport and Natural Resources Division and will work closely with the Division for Economic and Social Development which is concerned with the Sociological aspects of housing and the contribution of Community Development policies to self-help housing.

29/ According to E/CN.14/229/Rev.1.

/A meeting

A meeting of experts on housing problems in Africa met from 9 to 18 January 1963 in accordance with the terms of Commission Resolution 53 (IV). The objectives were to exchange views on the present housing situation; to define the main problems and the conditions necessary for their solution; to suggest ways and means of formulating and executing national housing policies; and to recommend to the fifth session of the Commission a programme of work and continuing arrangements within the Commission for the examination of housing and related problems.

A preliminary survey of housing in Africa (problems and policies) was prepared for consideration by this meeting; this was mainly based on visits to selected African countries by staff officials from the ECE and from the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs. Suggestions for a possible long-term programme of work on housing, building and town planning were put forward by the Secretariat for consideration, as a matter of priority, by the meeting of experts.

F. SPECIALIZED AGENCIES 30/

The Specialized Agencies' interest in their respective fields in housing, urban development and building, is growing continually. Following are brief accounts of the relevant activities of each of the specialized agencies:

1. International Labour Organization

The most important type of technical assistance rendered by the ILO relating to workers' housing is vocational training. In a number of countries the ILO has provided assistance with respect to a broad programme of vocational training for the building trades as a whole, while in other countries, the assistance has been confined to meeting the needs in specific building trades. A second important field is the improvement of productivity in the building industry, while the third major aspect of housing policy in which the ILO has a special competence is co-operative

30/ Urban Development, United Nations, New York 1962, Sales No. 63.IV.1. paras. on ILO, FAO, WHO and UNESCO.

/housing. Assistance

housing. Assistance is extended in the form of the provision of experts, the granting of fellowships, the preparation of manuals, the holding of various types of courses and the advising of Governments in formulating their policies relating to workers' housing.

2. Food and Agriculture Organization

Under its general mandate, FAO is concerned with improving the levels of living of rural populations. It recognizes that improved housing can make a significant contribution in this regard. FAO believes that the home economist should be closely associated with plans for family housing. In the first place the home economist is in a position to reflect the housekeeper's point of view in regard to physical planning of housing. In the second place, the home economist is in a position to assist the family and particularly the housewife in adapting to new housing conditions and to new and unfamiliar patterns of domestic economy, which may accompany them. FAO may assist, also, through its Forestry and Forest Products Division, in the adaptation of forest industries to the needs of housing construction, and is concerned with the possibilities of utilizing bamboo and other more perishable species for housing construction through treatment to make them longer-lasting.

3. World Health Organization

Since its creation the World Health Organization has carried out a world-wide programme of technical assistance in the public health and environmental sanitation fields. Several of these activities, especially those in public health administration, have had a strong, though indirect, relationship to national housing schemes in many countries. Special mention should be made, however, of WHO's community water supply programme initiated in 1959, the fundamental objective of which is the provision to the people of the world of a safe and palatable water supply, into each dwelling-unit or into each courtyard, in adequate quantities for personal and household uses.

Resolution 48 of the Twelfth World Health Assembly envisages assistance to Governments including advice in the organization, administration and financing of community water supplies. WHO is co-operating

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closely in the international programme through the Inter-Agency Working Party on Housing and Related Community Facilities. In 1961 an Expert Committee on public health aspects of housing was convened to advise on the scope and importance of this field, and to make specific recommendations to Governments. The report of the group of experts has been published as WHO Technical Report Series No. 225. WHO proposes to initiate within the next few years its programme of studies and technical assistance in public health aspects of housing. A publication dealing with the role of health ministries in housing will be prepared. Other proposed activities include regional and inter-regional seminars, country surveys and participation in joint missions with the United Nations and the other specialized agencies. In carrying out this programme, WHO considers housing within its community setting and therefore will pay major attention also to metropolitan planning and development.

4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

In the preliminary outline of the proposed programme and budget for 1963-64, UNESCO contemplates the continuation of the African School Planning Group established in Khartoum until the end of 1963. Some change in the technical directives and training of the group is expected during 1963-64, partly because of the recommendations on school building programmes in general made by the World Conference on School Construction held in London during 1962. The Regional School Building Centre in Bandung will be continued and will operate a training programme for officers from those Asian States which do not have national building centres. A meeting of experts from Asian States will draw up the curriculum of the training course. Work on urbanization problems will continue as part of the concerted programme of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

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5. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation 31/

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, established in 1961, operates by making long-term loans to finance development projects in its member countries. It also provides a wide variety of technical assistance services to these countries. This Bank does not finance separate housing projects but it may finance housing, which is part of a productive project. For instance, workers housing for an industrial plant. Money is also lent for industries which can support building industry such as steel and cement production.

The International Development Association (IDA), was established in 1960 to provide long-term development finance to countries which are unable to raise all the external finance they need on conventional loan terms. The terms of IDA credits - 50 years, with no interest payable - are therefore designed to impose a minimum burden of debt service on the balance of payments of the borrowing country. IDA besides loans for productive investments also gives credits for municipal water supply. Such a loan has been given for Jordan and Taiwan.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), established in 1956, assists the industrial development of its less advanced member countries by investing without Government guarantees in productive private enterprises in association with private capital and management. Its loans included assistance to cement manufacture in Pakistan.

31/ According to Press Release EC/2219, IB/1312, United Nations, New York, and the Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Housing and Urban Development, United Nations, New York 1962; Sales No. 63.IV.1.

/Annex

Annex

Projects in the United Nations Work Programme for 1964-65, as recommended by the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning at its second session, which will benefit ECLA countries.

Policies, programming and administration of housing building and planning

1.4 Study tour and workshop on housing programming and administration for Latin American candidates in 1964.

Housing and related community facilities

2.1 Subject to requests from Governments and the availability of funds, pilot and demonstration projects will be undertaken on the application of different techniques, including self-help, to low-cost housing in the developing countries.

2.4 Subject to priority being given by the Economic Commission for Latin America, and the availability of funds, a Seminar on Rural Housing and Community Facilities for Latin America will be undertaken by the Economic Commission for Latin America in 1965 as the first in a series of regional seminars on this subject.

Building and related industries

3.1 A comprehensive report will be prepared in accordance with draft resolution E/C.6/L.40[1/] for submission to the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning at its third session. The report will deal with: (a) achievements, possibilities and existing programmes in the field of industrialization of housing in the developing countries;... [The collaboration of the ECLA Division of Industry would be required to carry out this project.]

3.2 Activities in the field of modular co-ordination will be expanded to facilitate the development of the building materials industry.

1/ Resolution 4 (II) of the Committee.

/3.3 Subject

3.3 Subject to priority being given by the regional economic commissions, and the availability of funds, seminars on Development of Building Materials and Construction Industries in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Far East and Latin America, will be organized.

4.5 A study will be prepared on Housing and Planning Standards for the Resettlement of Squatters in consultation with the regional economic commissions and interested specialized agencies.

Financing of housing, building and planning

5.2 Subject to priority being given by the regional economic commissions, and the availability of funds, Seminars on Financing of Housing and Urban Development in Africa, Asia and the Far East [and Latin America] will be undertaken in 1964 and 1965.

Urbanization

7.2 An interregional expert group was convened in 1964 to discuss and make recommendations on the Planning and Development of New Towns.

7.4 A workshop will be organized in Venezuela in 1965 on the Physical Planning Aspects of Urbanization with reference to the Squatters Problem, in collaboration with the Centre for Studies on Development (CENDES) of the Universidad Central de Venezuela and the Economic Commission for Latin America.

7.5 Subject to priority being given by the regional economic commissions, and the availability of funds, regional seminars will be held on the Planning and Development of New Towns to discuss the application of the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on the subject to the region.

Technical cooperation

9.1 At the request of the Governments, advisory services will be provided and technical assistance projects in the housing, building and planning fields will be undertaken. Whenever possible these projects will be carried out in accordance with the objectives and criteria established by the Committee.

/They will

They will be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, the United Nations Special Fund as appropriate.

Within the limitations of available resources, high priority will be given to pilot projects which will be carried out in accordance with the criteria established by the Committee on pilot projects, utilizing the resources provided from technical assistance and Special Fund sources as well as from voluntary contributions by Governments and others under General Assembly resolution 1508 (XV).

In addition to the projects emerging from the Committee's recommendations, the following activities are included in the ECLA work programme:

ECLA (01-33) Study on productivity in the building industry 1963-64.

ECLA (01-02) Functions of urban centres in relation to size and location 1964.

To the above projects it is necessary to add a course on housing programming which will be offered by the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning in 1965.